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ABSTRACT

This research addressed three questions about the rewards of teaching: (1) how do teachers describe intrinsically rewarding teaching experiences; (2) how do the rewards of teaching relate to teachers' perceptions of the teaching activity; and (3) how does enjoyment of teaching relate to student achievement. Thirty elementary school teachers were observed and interviewed. Selected quotations from interviews provide insights into sources of teachers' satisfaction with their work as well as factors that distract or disturb them. Teachers enjoyed their work most when their interactions with students gave them a feeling of competency in dealing with the demands of the teaching activity. Findings indicate that teacher enjoyment varies with the type of intrinsic reward considered most important, and with their attitudes towards the subject they are teaching. There was a positive correlation between teacher enjoyment and student achievement. (JD)

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# INTRINSIC REWARDS OF TEACHING

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Paper prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Los Angeles, April 1981

The research reported in this paper is based on the author's doctoral research at The University of Chicago.

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## OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

### Purpose

Work carries with it rewards of various types and amounts. Teaching is an occupation that lacks opportunities for substantial financial gains, promotion along hierarchical career stages, or status (Dreeben, 1970; Lortie, 1975). Rather than offering these extrinsic rewards, teaching provides intrinsic rewards to members of the occupation. The activity of teaching can be enjoyable for its own sake.

The purpose of this research was to find out more about the rewards of teaching, specifically the intrinsic rewards as experienced by elementary school teachers: How do teachers describe intrinsically rewarding teaching experiences? What factors contribute to and detract from teacher enjoyment? How do rewards of teaching relate to one another, to teachers' perceptions of the structure of the teaching activity, and to student attention to classroom activities?

Although the limitations on the design of this study prevent generalizations, this descriptive and exploratory research adds to our understanding of rewards of teaching and provides information that suggests how the work of teaching might be made more enjoyable, meaningful, and productive.

### Rewards of Teaching

Rewards of teaching is a topic that has received the attention of relatively few researchers. The literature that does exist provides information about types of rewards reported by teachers and factors that influence the rewards available.

In their different times and ways, Waller (1932), Jackson (1968), and Lortie (1975) all conclude that the primary type of reward available to teachers is intrinsic. Teachers feel rewarded when they perceive themselves as being instrumental in students' learning achievements.

This emphasis on intrinsic rewards is explained by Lortie as an influence of the culture and structure of the teaching occupation. Culturally, teaching has a tradition of being an occupation for those who want to be of service, not for those who desire money, prestige, or power. The surrounding structure of teaching allows its members little influence over the distribution of either extrinsic rewards (e.g., money income, level of prestige, and amount of power

over others) or ancillary rewards (e.g., income security and frequent holidays). What teachers can influence are intrinsic rewards--the personally determined valuations of their work, the feelings of enjoying certain aspects of their work.

Because intrinsic rewards play a major role in influencing teachers' feelings about themselves, their students, and their work, further inquiry seemed justified in order to continue to explore variables that affect and are related to rewards in teaching. To conduct this inquiry, a theoretical model for enjoyment was used.

Theoretical Model for Enjoyment

Csikszentmihalyi's theoretical model for enjoyment (1975) posits both the structure of an enjoyable activity and the resulting state of enjoyment or flow. Intrinsically rewarding experiences are defined as those in which the interaction between a person and the environment is its own reward.

Structure of intrinsically rewarding activities. According to this model, involvement in almost any activity can be intrinsically rewarding. The central requirement is that the situation provides a person with information that his actions are meeting a set of challenges in the environment. When a person is engaged in an activity in which he perceives the challenges to be in line with his skills, he feels intrinsically rewarded. This is an experience of enjoyment, and within the model, the experience is called flow. In the flow state, a person is totally involved in an activity. His actions follow one another without his conscious intervention. The challenges prevent boredom, and the feedback he receives to his actions prevent worry. If a person perceives that his skills exceed the challenges of the activity, he feels bored. Or if he perceives that his skills are inadequate to meet the challenges, he feels worried.

Whether or not a person experiences flow in an activity depends not only on his perception of the challenges and skills involved in the activity but also on his ability to restructure the environment. To restructure the environment, the person controls the challenges and/or skills involved in an activity. If the person is worried, he can experience flow either by decreasing the challenges of the activity or increasing his skills. Or if the person is bored, he can return to the flow state either by increasing the activity's challenges or handicapping himself in some way so as to reduce his capabilities.

Applied to teaching, the flow model leads to the expectation that teaching will be intrinsically rewarding when teachers perceive challenges of the teaching

activity to be evenly matched to their abilities. Part of this perceived balance may result from teachers' control over the challenges and skills involved in their work.

Elements of intrinsically rewarding experiences. According to the model, the flow experience consists of a set of interdependent elements: the merging of action and awareness; a centering of attention on a limited stimulus field; a sense of self-transcendence; a feeling of being in control of one's actions and the environment; coherent, noncontradictory demands for action and clear, unambiguous feedback to one's actions; and an autotelic experience. Each of these elements will be explained as the findings are presented.

Because teachers are employed to facilitate the learning of students, it becomes important to know whether or not teacher enjoyment is related to student learning. Are teachers who enjoy their work more effective than those who do not?

Student Attention to Classroom Activities

One measure of teacher effectiveness is the criterion of student achievement. Because student achievement is directly related to student time on task (Carroll, 1963; Bloom, 1974; Stallings and Kaskowitz, 1974; McDonald, 1977; Fisher et al., 1980), student attention to classroom activities can be used as a measure of teacher effectiveness.

During the past several years, there has been an increased interest in identifying and studying variables that relate to student time on task. One variable that does not seem to be considered when trying to account for student attention is the teacher's enjoyment of his work. How might one person's enjoyment of an interpersonal activity affect others' engagement in the activity? According to Heider (1958), one way to induce action in another person is to show that person that you are enjoying the activity.

The flow model itself could be used to predict a relation between one person's enjoyment of a situation and other people's reaction to the same situation. The model indicates that intrinsic rewards are experienced when the activity is perceived to be optimally challenging in relation to one's skills. At these times, the person acts with total involvement, with concentrated attention to the task. He feels in control and is receiving feedback that helps him monitor his behavior so as to achieve his goals. The person is "in tune" with the situation and has a playful feeling and attitude about the activity. If this flow state occurs in an interpersonal activity, the

person is sensitive to what is happening to others in the situation. They are an integral part of the challenges, skills, goals, feedback, and control.

Based on both Heider's theoretical work and the flow model, a positive relation between teacher enjoyment and student on-task behavior can be expected. It may be that teachers' enjoyment induces students' involvement in learning activities, and/or it might be that teacher enjoyment occurs when there is an interaction between teachers and students that is sensitive to the challenges and skills of everyone involved in the activity.

The Problem

In summary, this research was addressed to three questions about the rewards of teaching:

How do teachers describe intrinsically rewarding teaching experiences?

How do rewards of teaching relate to teachers' perceptions of the structure of the teaching activity?

How does enjoyment of teaching relate to students' attention to classroom learning activities?

Procedures for Data Collection and Data Analysis

Thirty elementary school teachers in the greater Chicago area were interviewed. Eighteen of these teachers were fifth grade teachers participating in a study of classroom resource allocation conducted by the Education Finance and Productivity Center at The University of Chicago and sponsored by the National Institute of Education (NIE Grant No. 400-77-0094). The classroom of each teacher was observed by two observers for approximately three weeks during mathematics and social studies classes. Observation records on task engagement of 8 students in each classroom provided the student attention data for this study. In addition to interviewing the 18 teachers whose classrooms were observed, 12 other fourth or fifth grade teachers were interviewed to obtain a larger sample and a more detailed description of intrinsically rewarding teaching experiences. The 30 teachers represented schools with various combinations of levels of school expenditure and community socioeconomic status.

The content of the teacher interviews was analyzed to identify rewards of teaching and to describe intrinsically rewarding experiences. Correlational procedures were used to examine relations between rewards of teaching and to relate teacher enjoyment to level of student attention. Potentially intervening variables related to characteristics of the school setting (e.g., SES of the community and level of school expenditure) and characteristics of the teachers (e.g., years of teaching experience and hours spent on preparation for teaching) were considered.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

### I. DESCRIPTION OF INTRINSICALLY REWARDING TEACHING EXPERIENCES

The first question to which this research was directed is: How do teachers describe intrinsically rewarding teaching experiences? To answer this question, responses to interview questions were analyzed to identify teachers' perceptions of the structure of intrinsically rewarding teaching activities, including an identification of challenges and skills that comprise the structure. Following this, elements common to intrinsically rewarding teaching experiences were identified along with the effects of such experiences on teachers' sense of time and feelings about themselves and others. Interview responses were then examined to obtain information about factors that detract from teacher enjoyment and ways that teachers restructure their work to make it more enjoyable.

Structure of Intrinsically Rewarding Teaching Activities

There was consistency among the replies of all the teachers interviewed: the work of teaching can be very enjoyable. It is enjoyable when interactions with students (singly and collectively) provide information that leads the teacher to feel that he is competently dealing with the demands of the teaching activity.

The following quotes illustrate that "teaching going well" is defined by feeling that one's skills are adequate to meet the challenges of the teaching activity:

> You feel accomplished. You feel, "Gee, it worked!" Like you've gotten some kind of reward--a certificate of merit. I feel like I could do this forever, that I'm not so bad after all....I feel like going on....It (the feeling) is something I want to hold onto for the next time.

> Exhilarating. It's like the blood is circulating. A diffuseness. A sense of accomplishing or meeting goals.

> I feel energetic, relieved. My mind feels clear. I feel satisfied. I feel they must be learning today, that I must be hitting them and involving them in a positive way. It makes me feel generally good and not as tired when I leave school. It makes me laugh when I leave school. Very positive.

Conversely, "teaching not going well" is characterized by feeling that the challenges of the situation exceed one's ability to meet them. The sense that one's skills outbalance the work challenges is not present in teachers'

descriptions of times when teaching is not going well. As the following excerpts indicate, when teachers feel unable to carry out the teaching activity as desired, they expend considerable energy analyzing the situation for an explanation of why teaching is not going well. Teachers wonder if their efforts are inadequate or if they are not being reciprocated by the students involved in the interaction.

> I get a headache. It makes the day long. I have to ask myself: Was it because I was not prepared? Was the idea too complicated and I lost the kids? Could I have used another method of discussion? Did I create the problem?...I take it personally and feel dejected and discouraged.

> Frustrating because you have to take a hard look at yourself and ask whether it is you and your teaching methods or the inattention of the children or the weather or the holiday coming up. And sometimes it's hard to say to yourself, "I just did a lousy job, and how can I change it?" Sometimes angry. You know you've spent a lot of time preparing and you've done your best presenting it and the students haven't done their assignment. And the best laid plans go out the window.

In order to find out what teachers perceive to be challenges and skills involved in their work and to find out whether or not challenges and skills vary with the specific subject matter being taught versus the overall job of being a teacher, teachers were asked to identify the challenges of and skills used for teaching mathematics, for teaching social studies, and for teaching in general.

Challenges involved in teaching. Teachers' perceptions of challenges of their work depend to some extent on whether they consider the work of teaching specific subjects or the overall job of being a teacher. The interview responses indicate that teaching mathematics challenges teachers to help students understand mathematics and to individualize teaching according to students' abilities. In contrast, the teaching of social studies at the elementary school level requires that teachers make more of an effort to relate the subject matter to students' lives and to help students appreciate the applicability of social studies. Beyond the demands involved in teaching subject matter, teachers feel challenged by working on a daily basis with a heterogeneous group of 25 to 30 children, each of whom requires the teacher's attention and understanding. Building positive rapport with students, colleagues, and parents is an important task according to the teachers. Teachers also want to keep abreast of professional concerns and developments so that they can either initiate

or respond to change in their work. One teacher noted that not only does he have to respond to the challenges of teaching a variety of subjects and working with a variety of people, but also he has "to put it all together into a day," every school day. Ordering challenges and meeting different challenges simultaneously every working day is itself a challenge.

Skills involved in teaching. To meet these challenges of teaching, teachers feel that they need a variety of technical and interpersonal skills. When teachers think of teaching specific subjects, they most commonly perceive their skills as those of being able to use a variety of ways to present the subject and being able to select and use appropriate materials in the presentations. However, the work of teaching in general is seen by teachers as requiring additional skills for interacting with people, mainly children, in a caring and perceptive manner.

When challenges and skills are perceived as balanced, the teacher experiences intrinsic rewards or what, in the theoretical model for enjoyment, is referred to as flow. The next section of this paper will present a description of teachers' flow experiences.

Elements of Intrinsically Rewarding Teaching Experiences

The theoretical model for enjoyment proposes that a set of interdependent elements is common to the flow experience. Teachers' responses to interview questions were examined to determine if these elements are present in intrinsically rewarding teaching experiences, and if they are, how they are manifested.

Because elements common to the flow experience are interdependent, it is difficult and in some ways inappropriate to dissect teachers' talk for quotes to represent the presence or absence of each element singly. However, in order to analyze teachers' experiences as closely as possible, each element common to the flow experience will be looked at separately.

The merging of action and awareness. During the flow experience, the person is so involved in the activity that his attention is directed towards the activity itself and not to his awareness of his involvement in the activity. What one hears as teachers talk about their work is that this merging of action and awareness is often present in their experience and most acute when they feel that teaching is going well.

> I'm aware of myself as far as (knowing) I should be observing, what I should be doing, kind of thing....I'm usually so much involved in other people that I'm not aware of myself or whatever happened last night or what I'm worried about.

A centering of attention on a limited simulus field. This second characteristic of the flow experience means that one's attention is focused only on stimuli relevant to the activity. One teacher described this concentration in the following way:

> I'm totally involved. And if I ever thought about something else, I'd be out of it. And so I make sure that I'm right there with it. And usually there's so much happening and I want to see what's happening with them, that I'm busy and there's no time to think about anything else. Usually at 3 o'clock, I sit down and have a cigarette. Or Mabel next door comes in and we look out the window at the doves or birds in the courtyard. That's when I cut off. By night I can get back to it and think about the day.

That centering of attention is a distinguishing attribute of intrinsically rewarding teaching experiences is supported by comparing teachers' feelings when teaching is not going well for them. Conflicting demands are made on the teacher's attention and, at least in some cases, also on the students' attention. When teachers feel distracted and interrupted in their work, they describe their feelings as follows:

> Frustrating. Your morale gets low. Your attention goes down. You're not as serious as you might be. Not so intense. Kids to some degree know this, too. Most of what bothers me bothers them. For instance, during the eighth hour, the last class, we're constantly interrupted by early buses, announcements being made, any time the nurse might walk in, or the dean, or Joe Blow. Four to five of these and it's shot to hell. Nobody cares. At first the kids don't care but afterwards they want to work, want it (the interruptions) to stop.

A sense of self-transcendence. Interrelated with the other qualities of flow is a loss of self-consciousness or self-awareness. Thoughts about one's purposes and ability are not present during flow, but one may experience heightened awareness of the body and its internal functioning.

> (When teaching is going well), it's like running two miles and feeling really exuberant. A feeling of euphoria. Nothing could go wrong. Nothing could burst your balloon. A floating feeling. Everything is going great.

> It feels right. It feels the way life should be. All my days should be so good, you know. It feels different. It's like the whole world is together, you know.

A pointed out earlier, teachers are self-conscious when they are in situations which present challenges that seem beyond their ability to meet.

The flow of the activity is interrupted while the teacher evaluates his competence.

> Most times I feel as if it's something I have not done well enough or did not say the right thing....My first thought is, "What did I do or say that could have prevented that thing?"

A feeling of being in control of one's self and the environment. Although the person in flow is not aware of his feeling of control, he does not worry about the possibility of maintaining sufficient control.

The teachers interviewed in this study said, in essence, that it is difficult to feel assured of control of the classroom environment. For one thing, teachers sense considerable demands and it is difficult to feel "on top of it" for very long.

> I have such high expectations for myself as a teacher that I don't think I could ever reach them. I just can't reach the point where I'm satisfied with myself that I feel totally in control. And sometimes during the good times I get even more frustrated because I want to keep it up, or I see how great things can be, that I'm just not satisfied if it's less than great. So I never feel completely in control.

Also, classroom dynamics change rapidly, and feeling in control in the teaching activity requires being finely tuned to the interaction with the students in the classroom.

> At times staying in control goes along with the good times. Other times to have a good time in teaching you have to let down your control. This being in control can be an inhibition--something that will keep the kids from learning. There are times when you have to lose control of yourself in a way. It works back and forth.

When teachers feel that their work is not going well, generally they are aware of their sense of not feeling in control of the teaching situation.

> Because you're not feeling a sense of accomplishment, you're not moving. And then if you're not moving, then you feel you're not in control.

> (Teaching is going badly) when I feel I've done as much as I can and the situation I want to change keeps happening. When it doesn't change when you've put so much energy into it. Like the well is dry and I don't have anything left for the day. There's no pie left.

Coherent, noncontradictory demands for action and clear, unambiguous feedback. When experiencing flow, the person's attention is focused on goals that for him are well-defined, and his actions bring about reactions that clearly and immediately signal how well he is doing. If necessary, and without evaluation of the feedback, the person can adjust his actions to better meet the demands of the activity.

The impression obtained from the teachers interviewed is that the demands they perceive are rarely clear and noncontradictory. Sometimes the amount and pace of classroom activity is so great that it is difficult to think about or decide what to do next. But during the best times in the classroom, most teachers feel their goals are at least clearer than when teaching is not going well. And even if the demands for action are somewhat blurred or contradictory, during the good times the sense of control over the interaction enables teachers to "play it by ear." In response to the question, "When teaching is going well, is it clear what the right thing to do is?" teachers said:

> After you look back at it, yes. More so than when things aren't going right and you're trying to figure out what's causing this.

> Not always. Because sometimes it's happening so fast and there's so much, you can get caught up and the next step might not be as clear as you'd like it to be. And you'll just have to play it by ear sometimes. It's a matter of seeing if it's going to work. And if it doesn't, then you try something else until you kind of hit on what's the right thing to do.

One teacher described her worst teaching times as those that contained both competing demands and no indication of meeting goals:

> It's when you have so many different (demands). Here, this has to be done, that ought to be done. You have all that input and yet you don't really see any progress with the children. It seems that they're getting worse instead of better. That's when I don't feel so good.... Something has to have priority. And how do you separate what should come first? What should I do first? Especially when you have so many things thrown at you.

The feedback teachers rely on to evaluate their actions is a combination of observations of students (their behavior and academic performance) and their own intuitive gauge of what is going on in the classroom. Teachers seem to know clearly and immediately when the teaching activity is out of kilter even though they might not know why.

> Sometimes I do the wrong thing. I know it's the wrong thing immediately. Sometimes you do a wrong thing out of a reflexiveness. You rely on your knowledge of the chilren in front of you and their reaction. A teacher has to be tuned into the children completely and has to watch their reactions. And their reactions will guide you in what to do next. It's really not a cognitive thing; it's an intuitive thing.

Perhaps a teacher's sense of ordered goals and feedback is intertwined with a similar experience for the students.

> The children give you the clues. There's a certain kind of contentment. Their purpose seems to be clear in their heads, too. And they seem to be able to do whatever they're doing without you. They seem that they can just continue it.

Autotelic nature of the experience. The flow experience contains its own reward. Actually, the flow experience is its own reward.

When teachers experience flow in the teaching activity, they enjoy the activity for its own sake and feel like it could continue indefinitely: "I feel like I could do this forever." "You're doing and you can keep right on doing."

Teachers say that the enjoyable teaching times make all their efforts worthwhile. The autotelic experience is the teacher's payoff; extrinsic rewards are not enough to justify the teacher's energy expenditure.

> Absolutely fantastic! Very rewarding. Like it's all worthwhile. Like I'm contributing something. Like I'm not just taking home a paycheck or just putting in my time.

However, when the autotelic experience is absent, teachers doubt the worth of their efforts.

> It's the pits! You wonder why you're here sometimes. Is it worth it? Do they really care? Those are the days I usually go home and go right to bed. I'm exhausted. Very tired.

These intrinsically rewarding experiences also affect teachers' perceptions of the passage of time and their feelings about themselves and others.

Effects of Intrinsically Rewarding Teaching Experiences on Other Perceptions and Feelings

Teachers were almost unanimous in saying that during intrinsically rewarding teaching experiences time seems to pass much more quickly than usual. And perhaps this perception is shared by the students.

> You don't accomplish as much as you want because if they're really motivated into what you're teaching, they have questions of their own. And you see more aspects that you want to bring up. It just goes too quickly. When you're not having a good teaching time, time just seems to drag. Every five minutes you can't believe it's just five minutes. You think it's a half hour or more. If things are going well, even the kids will say, "You mean it's time for lunch?" "It's time to go home?"

The flow experience also affects how teachers feel about themselves and other people. It makes teachers feel confident, charged with energy, and gregarious.

> Your confidence just boosts. You just think you're the toughest, baddest thing around. And it makes you nicer to everybody else cause you kinda want to help other folks and you really want them to have this feeling you have, too.

> When teaching is going well, I feel sort of supercharged. I feel more comfortable, relaxed, healthy feeling, no headaches, strength--not just physical but mentally. You feel if this lesson went well, the logical extension of this lesson will go well. That is intellectual strength--to be able to carry on an implication to another step. I feel a lot more sociable. When teaching goes well, I'm a lot more able to talk about the times when teaching doesn't go well. I'm more willing to let myself be vulnerable if I've had success. I'm also more willing to offer my opinions to other people....I'm a lot more affectionate or more willing to enter into closer personal contact with other people.

When their work is not going well, teachers say they feel fatigued, withdrawn socially, and less physically well.

> You go home emotionally drained. You're so tired. Physically you're not. But emotionally--you just want to go home and sleep....When I have a bad day, I just avoid people. I want to go home and be left alone. I don't feel like talking, discussing something.

The theoretical model for enjoyment has been used so far to explain what the teaching activity is like when teachers enjoy (and do not enjoy) their work and what the experience of enjoying (and not enjoying) teaching activities is like. The model also can be used to identify factors that contribute to a lessening of teacher enjoyment and ways that the work of teaching can be made more intrinsically rewarding.

Factors That Diminish Teacher Enjoyment

According to the flow model, enjoyment of an activity is diminished by anything that either alters the perceived balance between skills and challenges or interrupts the flow experience. When a person perceives an imbalance between personal skills and task challenges, he feels either worried (not sufficiently skilled) or bored (not sufficiently challenged). When a person's attention is diverted from the activity which is giving him enjoyment, the flow experience is interrupted or ended. Therefore, teachers' comments about work-related worries, boring feelings, and distractions will be presented as factors that diminish teacher enjoyment.

Conditions leading to worry. Of the 30 teachers interviewed, four said that they had no worries about teaching or being a teacher. The other teachers expressed worries that, with the exception of a few miscellaneous comments, can be grouped into four categories: worries about insufficient extrinsic and ancillary rewards; worries about the administration of education; worries about professional preparation and practices; and worries about personal teaching competence.

Ten teachers voiced concern about insufficient extrinsic or ancillary rewards. These teachers said they worry about losing their jobs because of reduction in teaching forces, being transferred to another school within the district, receiving a salary that is less than needed or is less than justified by the service they provide society, and receiving less respect from society than they deserve.

Nine teachers expressed worries about the attitudes and practices of the administration of the schools. Some of these expressions were directed at school administrators and school boards. Teachers were concerned about what they perceived as administrators' antagonistic attitudes towards teachers and administrators' struggle with teachers for control of the schools. Teachers also mentioned worries about decisions to bus for integration and to not offer summer school for children who needed remedial instruction.

Other worries about the administration of schools focused on how education in general is being managed. Among these worries are: feeling that the goals for education are becoming too narrow; sensing increased demands to be responsible for teaching things that should be taught in the home; and being expected to teach increasingly larger classes with fewer and fewer resources (materials and money).

Aspects of professional preparation and practices bothered six of the teachers interviewed. They talked about: anyone being allowed to become and remain a teacher regardless of competence; the lack of guidance and support given new teachers--"they're just thrown into rooms"; certain educational practices which seem noneducative, such as putting a time limit on skill achievement; going along with experimental programs to the detriment of students; teachers who want to maintain the traditions of the school regardless of other changes occurring; and teachers going on strike--"It's not the professional thing to do."

The worries about personal teaching competence, voiced by eight teachers, are primarily of two types: worries about not helping some students make academic progress and worries about harming students psychologically.

> Sometimes there are children you feel you can't reach. And you don't know what type of approach to take to reach them. The idea bothers me because any area you're weak in as a teacher, these children will probably be weak in.

> (I worry) that I won't destroy or completely massacre a kid by a comment. Kids see me as a role model. That's a heavy trip.... I'm afraid I'm going to pull the rug from under someone and they won't be able to regroup.

This review of what worries teachers about their work indicates that teachers have fewer worries about conditions intrinsic to the teaching activity (personal competence) than conditions extrinsic to the activity itself (insufficient extrinsic and ancillary rewards, administration of education, and professional preparation and practices).

Conditions leading to boredom. About half (14) of the teachers interviewed said that there is nothing boring about their work. And, in general, these teachers emphatically stated that they couldn't even imagine themselves feeling bored. In response to the question, "Does teaching ever get boring for you?" these teachers identified their interaction with students and the curriculum as their boredom barrier.

> Oh, God, no! It's partly because the curriculum changes, texts change, kids change. That's the best part of it--that it isn't boring.

> There are so many things going on and taking place. I don't have a chance to get bored. The energy level of the children is so high or magnetic that you get pulled in. I may come in with a headache or cramps and see those faces wanting something from you.

The teachers who did say that they experienced boredom in their work listed a variety of causes of it. Most of these teachers reported feeling bored at times by the activity of teaching itself. They were bored by the methods they used to teach some subjects and/or by their interactions with students.

Eight teachers said that they were bored teaching some subjects, especially those which they see as being taught by drill and repetitious exercises. However, teachers varied as to what subjects they perceived as lending themselves to such repetition.

The teachers who reported feeling bored in their interactions with students said the boring times occur when they are working with a student having difficulty learning, or they just have times when they feel a general boredom of working with children.

> Having worked with a child on the same concept over and over and he still hasn't gotten it, you're tired of listening to it yourself, you're tired of working with him because you've done the same thing over.

> At times the children, while you treat them as individuals, blend. I'm finding that more now. They seem more similar year after year. It's not that I forget their names. But when you see the same type of behavior, you react the same way, you discuss the same way. It's like being computer programmed at times.

Teachers also mentioned other reasons why their work is boring at times. Some felt bored preparing lessons and grading papers. A few attributed boredom to the time of year (the period between Christmas and spring break) and the weather (anything that keeps the students inside during recess). One teacher said that she had worked in a stimulating school environment but that in her current situation the teachers did not "bounce ideas off each other." A teacher who works in an open-space school felt that the environmental arrangement constrained him from creating as much variety and stimulation as he would like at times.

A few teachers said they were bored at in-service meetings, and one of these teachers went on to talk about other administrative practices that she found tiresome.

> Conversations with principals about how we're going to walk around the block and how we're going to line the kids up. Bulletins you have to read. Truly boring things of teaching.

Conditions causing distractions. Teachers were asked, "What distracts you when teaching is going well?" Most of the teachers cited the same two sources: people outside the classroom and students in the classroom.

Teachers are distracted by people--other teachers and staff, administrators, visitors--who enter the classroom directly or who infringe on the classroom via the intercom or by creating commotion just outside the classroom. Perhaps teachers take many interruptions from outsiders in stride. But what they consider most distracting--or even insulting--is being asked to stop what they're doing to do something that they think could be done at another time. Filling out forms is an example several mentioned.

Students distract teachers when they behave in ways that do not meet the teachers' expectations. One teacher talked about being distracted by students who didn't catch on to what was being taught, but the other comments about students' distractability referred to their conduct--not paying attention, fighting, socializing, loafing around, getting sick.

In addition to these two main sources of distraction, two teachers said that they found the school schedule disruptive to their work. The continuity of the classroom is broken when, for example, the science lesson could continue well for a while longer but the bell rings for the students to go to music class.

Ways to Restructure the Teaching Activity to Make It More Enjoyable

The model for enjoyment specifies that an activity can be made more enjoyable if a person restructures the activity so that task challenges and/or skills are adjusted and brought into a balanced relationship. Therefore, a person who worries about meeting the challenges of the activity can either decrease the perceived challenges or increase his skills to meet the challenges. To restructure a boring activity into an enjoyable one, the person needs to either increase his challenges or handicap himself in some way so as to decrease his skills. In addition to restructuring the activity to adjust the challenges and skills balance, a person can increase enjoyment of an activity by eliminating some of the distractions which spoil the flow experience.

Decreasing worries. When teachers worry about their personal teaching competence, they attempt to restructure their interaction with students. In comparison with their almost helpless attitude towards worries about administrative and professional practices, teachers reflected a feeling that they should be able to better meet the academic and psychological needs of children.

Worries about harming students psychologically are dealt with by increasing one's sensitivity to students' reactions and feelings. But regrets about past actions remain.

> If I ever say something to a kid, if I have a bad temper or if I'm just in one of those grouchy moods or if I say something in anger, I always, later, try to come back. And if I was wrong, I will apologize. And if I wasn't wrong, I will have a talk with the child and explain, in a more calm state, why I said what I said. I mean, I try to be a human being, so I think that that probably alleviates some of the bad feelings that a child might have. I once held a child back and I have a lot of guilt feelings about that. And there's nothing you can do about that. I mean, that's just over and done with. And

> I think back to him--this was a few years ago. And I don't know why, but I have a feeling that maybe it wasn't the best thing to do. And I worry about that. Because, I mean, an action that you took could affect a child's life. It's very scary.

Worries about not helping students make academic progress are dealt with by increasing efforts, trying different teaching methods and materials, and seeking the assistance of resource personnel in the school district. If such efforts don't succeed, the teacher might refer the student for special help from someone such as a learning disabilities teacher. In this case, the challenges of teaching are decreased but without a sense of accomplishment.

> You sweat yourself out at night thinking how you can keep a student's attention. You try something...and then call it a learning disability

Worries about insufficient extrinsic and ancillary rewards lead teachers to think about or make plans to leave teaching. The only response teachers have when they worry about being released, underpaid, and unappreciated is to think about or make plans to leave teaching. Increasing ancillary and extrinsic rewards is beyond their power.

Decreasing boredom. When teachers feel bored by their use of certain teaching methods, their interactions with students, and environmental constraints (time of year, weather, and space arrangements), their remedy is to try something different within the classroom--different teaching methods, materials, content, grouping arrangements of students, or grade level. Taking control over what, when, how, and to whom they teach enables teachers to increase challenges when they seem to wane.

Teachers said that grading papers and planning lessons are less boring if they do such work with the stereo or radio providing background music or if they work in the teacher's lounge, occasionally chatting with colleagues. What does the teacher do when bored by an in-service meeting or a conversation with a principal about how to line up the students?

> Close 'em out or pick a fight with them and make 'em mess up and ruin the meeting. Do the same thing the kids do in a classroom when a teacher is boring them. If you're trying to give 'em a signal, just nitpik everything they say.

Decreasing distractions. The two sources of distractions--people outside the classroom and students inside--are handled differently by teachers. Teachers consider the distractions caused by people outside the classroom as much more difficult to control. Most teachers said that they simply put up with intrusions on the classroom.

When it comes to distractions from someone inside the classroom, teachers were more confident of and comfortable with their ability to take charge. In order to decrease students' inattentiveness, teachers said that at the beginning of the school year they stress standards for behavior and work. They also plan activities and experiences that they think will appeal to the students' interests and "challenge a child on his level." If, in spite of the planned activities students are inattentive, teachers redirect students' attention, and their own, to another activity--educational or recreational.

> When I'm at the end of my rope (because of distractions), I just say, "Let's go." We all pick up and go out in the hall or to the library or outside.

## II. REWARDS OF TEACHING AND THEIR RELATION TO TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE TEACHING ACTIVITY

### Rewards of Teaching

As expected, teachers reported that their work rewards are intrinsic. In response to an open-ended interview question, 28 of the 30 teachers said that they felt rewarded by their interactions with students. Within these responses, two themes about teacher rewards were discernible.

Eighteen teachers expressed feeling most rewarded when they felt that students had accomplished learning goals because of their--the teachers'--efforts. This type of intrinsic reward places the emphasis on the outcome of one's work. For some teachers (12), this reward was fairly immediate.

> My purpose all the time is to have children learn, grasp, to see them develop. I would do anything--and I put in long, long hours--if I could see them make progress and accomplish that which they ought to at that particular stage. To see that, to see that development, growth, that this child has really learned, he's moving, he's not wasting his time, to use his time wisely and well.

Others (5 teachers) who said that they were rewarded by students' learning felt that these rewards were received later when long-term learning effects become evident.

> You don't see what you do sometimes at that time. I enjoy seeing them later--to see what kind of individuals they have become. They share with you things they recall.

Another type of intrinsic reward was apparent in the comments of 10 teachers. These teachers felt their greatest reward was that of simply enjoying the experience of teaching. For these teachers, the interaction with students is the reward rather than the students' learning achievements. Enjoying the process of helping students develop is emphasized more than the learning outcome itself.

> The kids. Especially this age group. They're so honest in their feelings, and they bring so much to the classroom--points of view, experiences, creative abilities regardless of their skills. With this particular age group, too, you can do more with them. They're so much more aware of things around them and of the world. I could never be a kindergarten teacher or a first, second, or third grade teacher. By that I mean that I'm sure it's equally as challenging. It's just the awareness that I'm talking about. Just children as children.

For some teachers, enjoying the experience and activity of teaching means a vicarious enjoyment of students' successful and exciting experiences.

> I enjoy when a student gets to the point of arriving at a particular answer. I love the look on the kid's face when he finally has the satisfaction that he learned and he is happy. The smile on his face. That to me is the epitomy of the success of teaching. Or the excitment they have.

Teachers also were asked to rank 10 reasons for enjoying their work. The rankings (see the table below) are consistent with statements teachers made earlier in the interview: the work of teaching is enjoyable for intrinsic

TEACHERS' RANKINGS OF REWARDS OF TEACHING (N = 28)

| Reward | Mean Rank | Std. Dev. | Range |
|---|---|---|---|
| Knowing that I have "reached" students and they have learned | 7.75 | 1.65 | 5-10 |
| Enjoyment of the experience, and/or use of skills | 7.18 | 1.52 | 3-10 |
| Development of personal skills (mental and physical) | 6.96 | 1.26 | 5-10 |
| The activity itself: the pattern, the action, the world it provides | 6.36 | 2.11 | 2-10 |
| Friendship, companionship | 3.64 | 2.41 | 1-10 |
| Chance to use influence | 3.29 | 2.76 | 1-9 |
| Respect from others | 2.89 | 2.15 | 1-8 |
| Time (especially summers) for travel and holidays | 2.86 | 1.84 | 1-7 |
| Security of income or position | 2.18 | 1.31 | 1-6 |
| Salary | 1.86 | 1.60 | 1-6 |

reasons. The reward ranked highest by most teachers was "knowing that I have 'reached' students and they have learned." Second in importance was "enjoyment of the experience, and/or use of skills."

In comparison, extrinsic and ancillary rewards were considerably less important. Teachers felt that their salary and the security of their income or position contributed least to the enjoyment of their work.

Reactions to both the open-ended question and the ranking item point to the finding that there are two predominant types of intrinsic teaching rewards: the feeling that students have learned as a result of one's efforts and the feeling that the experience of interacting with students is itself enjoyable. The latter type of feeling is an intrinsic reward defined by the theoretical model for enjoyment.

It should be noted that although these two types of rewards were reported in response to both an open-ended and a forced-choice interview question, individual teachers' rankings of rewards are not entirely consistent with the themes identified in their own statements. Sixteen of the 27 teachers emphasized the same type of intrinsic reward (reaching students or enjoying the experience) in their statements as in their rankings. The other 11 teachers responded to one question by saying the most important reward was "reaching students" and then said in response to the other question that "enjoying the experience" was the greatest reward. Because of this variation in some teachers' responses, the method of identifying rewards will be specified in the subsequent analysis.

Relation Between Rewards of Teaching and Characteristics of the School Setting and the Teacher

When rankings of the 10 reasons for enjoying teaching were correlated with characteristics of the school setting (level of school expenditure and socioeconomic status of the school community), only one significant correlation was found. Teachers in lower socioeconomic schools ranked "reaching students" as a more important work reward than did teachers in higher socioeconomic communities ($r = -0.57$, $p \leq .002$, $n = 28$). This relation also was found when the Chi-square test was used to examine the relation between teachers' statements about rewards of teaching and SES of the children in the school ($x^2 = 5.0$, $df = 1$, $p \leq .05$). Nine of the 10 teachers in low SES schools said that "reaching students" rather than "enjoying the experience" was most rewarding for them. The two types of intrinsic rewards were reported equally by teachers in middle and high SES schools.

The significance of teacher characteristics (sex, years of teaching experience, amount of education, and amount of time spent on school-related activities outside of school hours) also was considered in relation to rewards of teaching. As the number of years of teaching experience increased, the relative ranking for "reaching students" also increased ($r = 0.37$, $p \leq .06$, $n = 28$). The sex of the teacher did not appear related to any reasons for enjoying work, but teachers who reported more enjoyment of job security spent the least amount of time on their work beyond school hours ($r = -0.34$, $p \leq .07$, $n = 28$).

Teachers' stated rewards of teaching also were examined in relation to characteristics of the teacher. One significant correlation was found: teachers who said "reaching students" was their greatest reward spent the most time preparing lessons, grading papers, and doing other teaching activities during off-school hours ($x^2 = 9.5$, $df = 2$, $p \leq .01$, $n = 28$).

Relation Between Rewards of Teaching

Teachers' rankings of the two intrinsic rewards were examined to determine if there was an association between them and between them and rankings of any of the other rewards. "Enjoying the experience" correlated positively with the other intrinsic reward defined by the flow model, "the activity itself: the pattern, the action, the world it provides" ($r = 0.40$, $p \leq .04$, $n = 28$). However, the other intrinsic reward of "reaching students" correlated negatively with both "enjoying the experience" ($r = -0.32$, $p \leq .09$, $n = 28$) and "the activity itself" ($r = -0.40$, $p \leq .04$, $n = 28$). Other correlations between rewards of teaching showed that teachers who enjoy the experience and activity of teaching are significantly less rewarded by their chance to influence students and their development of mental and physical personal skills.

The relations between rewards of teaching are further supported by results of a factor analysis of teachers' rankings of rewards. Teachers who place greater importance on the rewards of enjoyment of the experience and the activity of teaching place considerably less importance on the rewards gained from seeing children learn, developing skills, and influencing children. The converse also is true.

Relation Between Rewards of Teaching and Teachers' Perceptions of the Structure of the Teaching Activity

Teachers' perceptions of the structure of the teaching activity were measured by teachers' responses to a challenges and skills graph. Teachers

were asked to place a coin on the graph to indicate the relative balance of challenges and skills they find in teaching mathematics, in teaching social studies, and in teaching in general. These responses were then coded as high flow, low flow, and other (worry and boredom).

Responses to the graph indicate that the teachers perceive a great deal of challenge in their work. Further, those teachers who did not feel their skills balanced the challenges were more likely to feel a shortage rather than a surplus of skills.

Teachers' perceptions of the balance of challenges and skills showed no relation to either the SES of the school community or the level of school expenditure in the district. One background characteristic of the teacher, the number of years of teaching experience, did show significant variation with the perceived balance of challenges and skills in teaching. Compared with teachers who had had more years of experience, those with less experience were more likely to perceive an imbalance of challenges and skills for teaching mathematics ($X^2 = 4.43$, df = 1, $p \leq .05$, n = 27) and for teaching social studies ($X^2 = 5.41$, df = 1, $p \leq .02$, n = 25). However, perceptions of the structure of the overall job of teaching did not vary with the number of years a person had been a schoolteacher.

The preceeding findings regarding rewards of teaching and perceived balance of challenges and skills in teaching lead to the second question to which this research is directed: How do rewards of teaching relate to teachers' perceptions of the structure of the teaching activity? What was found was that flow in teaching is related to high rankings of two intrinsic rewards, but that the relation between flow in teaching and these two intrinsic rewards varies with the subject matter being taught. Teachers who considered "reaching students" as a very important reward reported flow-like experiences in teaching mathematics ($r = 0.39$, $p \leq .05$, n = 26). In contrast, higher rankings of enjoying "the activity itself" correlated positively with flow in teaching social studies ($r = 0.34$, $p \leq .10$, n = 24). Therefore, the findings indicate that teacher enjoyment (measured by relative balance of challenges to skills in teaching) varies with both the type of intrinsic reward considered more important and the subject matter being taught.

## III. TEACHER ENJOYMENT AND ITS RELATION TO STUDENT ATTENTION

The third question addressed in this study was: How does enjoyment of teaching relate to students' attention to classroom learning activities?

### Relation Between Characteristics of the School Setting and the Teacher and Student Attention

Before examining the relation between teacher enjoyment and student attention, the data were examined to identify the influence of intervening variables on student attention level. No correlations of significance were found between student attention to classroom activities and characteristics of the school setting (SES of the school community and level of school financial expenditure). One characteristic of the teacher related significantly to student attentiveness. Teachers with master's degrees had higher student attention in social studies classes than did teachers with only the bachelor's degree ($r = 0.52$, $p \leq .04$, $n = 16$).

### Relation Between Rewards of Teaching and Student Attention

When teachers' rankings of reasons for enjoying their work were individually correlated with student attention, one finding emerged. Relatively high rankings of "enjoying the experience" were significantly and positively related to student attention in social studies periods ($r = 0.60$, $p \leq .02$, $n = 15$). Relatively high rankings of "reaching students," "developing skills," and "influencing others" with relatively low rankings of "enjoying the experience" and "the activity itself" were associated with low attention of students in social studies lessons ($r = -0.49$, $p \leq .06$, $n = 15$). Teachers who gain intrinsic rewards from their interaction in the teaching activity may be less goal-directed and this disposition relates to a greater involvement of students in social studies activities but not in what are considered more basic skills activities. Attention to mathematics activities did not appear related to any of the rewards of teaching when considered individually or when grouped into factors.

The positive correlation between "enjoying the experience" and high student attention in social studies classes may be related to teachers' sense of autonomy or ownership in developing and using curriculum. Compared with their teaching of mathematics, the teachers played a greater role in selecting, adapting, and developing the social studies curriculum. The mathematics curriculum was more prescribed at a school or district level.

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